

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the first paragraph on page 12 with the following replacement paragraph:

In the marking unit, the number of security features issued and the mass and/or the volume of the marking medium issued are preferably evaluated and stored. This storage is advantageously carried out both in a memory element arranged on a container of the marking medium and in the marking unit or the associated data-processing system. The containers provided with the data are verifiably replaced after being emptied and are transferred in a secure manner to a security provider for filling. In addition, the replacement of the containers with marking medium, the rolls or the like for direct application is registered, so that the transport paths and also the number of containers in circulation are known and can be checked. Advantageously, the data registered by the manufacturer or the filler in the data-processing system, which data is not accessible to the manufacturer, is transmitted to a neutral authority (clearing authority) monitoring the entire returnable circulation. In parallel with this, it may be necessary for the security provider likewise to transmit the production-relevant data read from the containers to the clearing authority for comparison, or for the security ~~manufacturer~~ provider to check the information and data from the manufacturer or filler and the clearing authority for their plausibility.

Please replace the first full paragraph on page 20 with the following replacement paragraph:

Provided after the marking unit 23 is a reader 26 or a scanner, which inspects and logs the at least one further security element 16 applied and passes this information on to the data-processing system 24. The reader 26 is preferably spaced apart from the marking unit 23 at a

very short distance, for example less than 3 m, in order to permit the inspection function, therefore generally the verification of the codes or security features applied, without the returnable package 11 rotating away. At the same time, faults or non-marking is also detected. These lead to bottles or cans that have not been marked completely being sorted out via a sorting unit 31. Between the reader 26 and sorting unit 31, a level inspection system 28 is preferably provided, in order to check whether quality deficiencies or non-compliance with at least one quality ~~deficiency~~ feature of the goods is present. This level inspection system 28 can likewise be provided before the sensor 21, in this arrangement a signal which prevents the issue of further security features 16 preferably being given to the data-processing system 24 or the control unit 22 relating to the level inspection 28 in the event of quality deficiencies.